

**NORTHEASTERN GREAT BASIN RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL
(NEGBRAC)
MEETING MINUTES
August 3, 2001
Eureka, NV**

August 3 - Business Meeting

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:

Dave Tattam	(2) Wild Horse & Burro
Vince Garcia, Chairman	(3) Native American
Bill Upton	(1) Mining
Bob Edwards	(1) Transportation & ROW
Patsy Tomera	(3) Public at Large
Donald King	(2) Wildlife
Jon Muller	(2) Recreation
Robert McGinty	(2) Environment
Kathy Ataman	(2) Archaeology

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:

Helen Hankins	Field Manager, Elko Field Office
Eric Luse	Associate Field Manager, Ely Field Office
Jerry Smith	Field Manager, Battle Mountain Field Office
Jo Simpson	Chief, Office of Communications, Nevada State Office
Tanya Arnberger	Accounting Technician, Elko Field Office
Diane Murray	Public Affairs Officer, Winnemucca & Battle Mountain Field Offices
Joe Freeland	Fire Management Officer, Elko Field Office
Dave Davis	Fire Management Officer, Battle Mountain Field Office
Ken Bailey	Project Coordinator, Falcon-Gonder Power lines, Battle Mountain Field Office (Intern)

Other Attendees:

Bill VanBruggen	USFS, Ruby Mountain/Jarbidge Ranger District
Jerry Green	USFS, Ely Ranger Station
John Burdrow	Sierra Pacific Power
Art Gell	Eureka County
Jon Hutchins	Eureka County

Note to readers: A copy of each attachment listed in the text of, and at the end of these minutes is on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Elko Field Office of the BLM. Persons desiring to view attachments should contact Tanya Arnberger at (775)753-0379.

Welcome and Introduction

I. MINUTES:

- Tabled until next meeting due to lack of a quorum.

II. VEGETATION GUIDELINES

- Hudson not present. Update from Bill Upton - still in draft form. Needs to be sent to RAC members. Hudson, Don, & Bill form the committee. Bill & Don to fix guidelines by next RAC meeting, which is scheduled for September 21, 2001.

III. BATTLE MOUNTAIN FIRE USE PLAN

- Dave Davis, Battle Mountain FMO. See Attachment 1.
- Prescribed Fire: Signed agreements/understanding with ranchers on the district to let the land "rehab" for two growing seasons before any burns are ignited. Smoke management is a concern and there would be an MOU with NDEP concerning smoke management.
- Mines are Category A and each mine is different. Understandings with Cortez to provide training and will IA these areas and assist with other areas. Can use Battle Mountain Gold for dipping. Echo Bay will be able to use heavy equipment within 5 miles of the mine. WSA's are Category C within certain parameters. There are grazing restrictions and must have "buy-in" with the permittees. MIST (Minimal Impact Suppression Tactics) is used in these areas, and water can be used. In Category D, fire is desired and fires should be allowed to burn in an unrestricted manner.
- The RAC will make recommendations to go forward with the Land Use Plan Amendment.

IV. ELKO FIELD OFFICE FIRE LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT

- Joe Freeland, Elko FMO. See Attachment 2.
- The RAC will make recommendations to go forward with the Land Use Plan Amendment. The information is available at www.nv.blm.gov/Elko/nepa/fire/FireManagementAmendment.htm. There is a need to emphasize prescribed fire in Elko County.
- If comments are wanted on the public register, please write, email, or a plan to leave a recorded message or conversation.

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V. ELKO OFFICE OHV/CALIFORNIA TRAIL/ SPECIAL AREA LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT

- Helen Hankins - Initiated a LUPA for fire use in prescribed fire and fire suppression. This fall Elko will be initiating another LUPA which will amend both of existing LUPA's to primarily establish objectives of how to manage off-highway vehicle use. At this time, the entire district is open to unrestricted OHV use with the exceptions of the WSA's. There is an opportunity to incorporate bike/horse/hiking trails concerning the CNHTIC (California National Historic Trails Interpretive Center) into the LUPA. Tosowe and Rock Creek are used by the Native Americans for religious and healing ceremonies. Elko is planning to incorporate this into the LUPA to establish Tosowe and Rock Creek as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. LUPA will be coming in November at the Statewide Meeting.

VI. FALCON-GONDER POWERLINE

- Ken Bailey, Project Coordinator - Environmental Impact Statement Schedule - Three public meetings on the Draft EIS were held on June 19, 20, and 21, 2001. Public Comment period on the Draft EIS ends on August 23, 2001. A Preliminary Final EIS is scheduled to be reviewed by the BLM in early November. The "camera ready" Final EIS to be delivered to the BLM by November 19, 2001. To be filed with the EPA and Notice of Availability published for the Final EIS on December 14, 2001. The Final EIS "30 Day" Governor's Consistency Review Period is during January 2002. The Record of Decision will be published and the Right-of-Way granted in February 2002.
- COM (Construction, Operation, and Maintenance) Plan - Scope of Work was finalized in June. BLM review of the Draft of COM Plan is planned for mid-September and review of the Final COM Plan is planned for mid-November. The "camera ready" COM Plan is planned to be delivered to the BLM by the end of the year.
- Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMP) - Proposal for new uses of federal public lands are evaluated for consistency with the goals, objectives, management actions and land use designations contained in the relevant RMP's. Since portions of the Falcon to Gonder Route alternatives extend outside of designated utility corridors and cross a designated low visibility corridor along I-80, the BLM determined that amendments to relevant RMP's would be required as part of the proposed action. BLM has also decided to amend the Shoshone-Eureka RMP at the same time to delete an existing utility planning corridor along Highway 305 based on recently obtained information about sensitive resources and wetlands along the corridor. The amendments are as follows by area:
- Shoshone-Eureka Resource Management Plan Amendment - The BLM's Battle Mountain Field Office would designate a new utility corridor up to three miles wide (except where

constraints exist) along the Falcon to Gonder transmission line route and delete an existing planning corridor along Highway 305.

- Elko Resource Management Plan Amendment - The BLM's Elko Field Office would designate a new utility corridor up to three miles wide (except where constraints exist) along the Falcon to Gonder transmission line route and modify a previous decision to allow the transmission line and a new utility corridor to cross the existing "low visibility" corridor along I-80.
- Egan Resource Management Plan Amendment - If the preferred alternative is selected, it follows an existing three-mile wide utility corridor between Eureka and Ely, therefore, the Egan RMP would not require any amendments for the transmission line.
- The BLM has conducted outreach activities to obtain public input on the project and proposed amendments, developed and circulated planning criteria for use in evaluating the amendments and incorporated an analysis of the RMP amendments into this EIS. Regulations call for a special Governor's Consistency Review of the final EIS and RMP Amendments document.
- Preferred Alternate Route - The Pine Valley (a) Alternative Route, which follows Segments A, C, D, F, G, I, and J, is the preferred alternative route in the Draft EIS (Attachment 3 & 4). This route was selected by the BLM as the preferred alternative, because it will have fewer environmental impacts than the other alternatives presented for consideration.
- Questions were raised about the susceptibility to fire. The answer is that the transmission line is 100% steel and is not susceptible to fire, and the line could be used as a firebreak.
- It was stated that any LUPA must have a recommendation from the RAC. Hoping for a quorum at the next meeting to make a recommendation on the RMP amendment.
- Helen Hankins - Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act Acquisitions - See Attachment 5. Nominations for land acquisitions are due by September 28, 2001. There are a number of parcels designated for disposal by BLM to private. We are only allowed to propose to acquire Environmentally Sensitive lands in the State of Nevada. Capital improvements are limited to Clark County.
- **Public Comment Period 11:00 am**
- Norman Suverly from the Cooperative Extension introduced himself and stated he would like to talk about the proposed WSA on the Ely District. The Tri-County (White Pine, Nye, and Lincoln) Commissioners asked the Coop to facilitate meetings and workshops for public input, and to later work statewide if possible. They would like to see public and government participation in deciding where WSA's would be. He wants to make an

awareness of this subject. (Jo Simpson said that the BLM is in support of this taking place.) Mailing addresses are on the Web.

- Art Gell had some questions about disposals at the Battle Mountain Field Office. He would like to see land exchanges and purchases easier and not so lengthy. Is there anything happening to make it easier? Some people on the district are trying to block land together. John Eade has facilitated a land exchange with 6-10 private landowners and it has seemed to help the process (Helen Hankins).

VII. COMBINED BLM/FOREST SERVICE RAC:

- Helen Hankins, Elko Field Manager & Jo Simpson, Office of Communications, NSO - This is not a good time to change the Charter due to the transition in administration. The two agencies have agreed to continue to do it informally, as we are now, until we can change the Charter. Need to put decision items in the Notice of Agenda into the Federal Register 30 days in advance of meeting. Can include the Forest Service in the Field Manager reports and if there are specific agenda items, the Forest Service will contact Helen.

VIII. WEED FREE HAY CERTIFICATION INITIATIVE:

- Helen Hankins - The EA is still in draft form. Expecting it to go out for public comment late fall/early winter. Patsy Tomera - The Weed program in Reno has hired two people and has talked about using the brand inspector. There are eight certified growers of weed free hay.

IX. CALIFORNIA HISTORIC TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER:

- Helen Hankins - See Attachment 6. Planning public meetings for the month of September to discuss what will be interpreted. The site has been selected at Hunter. Hope to have the interpretive plan developed by December of this year. A Senate Appropriation Bill for \$2,000,000 should be available to the BLM by December or January. The BLM will either continue with the current contractor, EDAW, or put out a request for proposals. The Advisory Board will help to decide to keep the contractor or put out the request. Need to identify satellite sites. Planning to have sites in Wells and other places near/not near the center. Planning to open the doors the summer of 2004. EDAW has proposed to have a conservation easement to protect the view shed. There will be a permanent full time staff of eight to ten people and a seasonal staff of interpreters. The ranch is giving 40 acres, and the building, parking, picnic, exhibit areas includes 11 of those 40 acres.

X. OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE GUIDELINES:

- Jon Muller, RAC member - See Attachment 7. Discussion of what should be in the guidelines followed. Include non-motorized as a restriction? Motorized or mechanized? The BLM National Plan excluded mountain bikes from the OHV Guidelines. Change the wording to be more positive? The guidelines do not pertain to private lands. Access is public to public, not crossing private to get to public. The current draft does not define where vehicles can and cannot go. Need to correlate with other guidelines to include riparian areas, etc. The standards needed to define the guidelines are already there. What is a road (it needs to be defined)? The OHV use won't change much from standard to standard. Can develop a supplemental for mountain bike use, if needed. Seasonal use of roads? New roads? Site specific and different restrictions? Preamble: State the rights and responsibilities of governing agencies and OHV users. Will work on preamble at next meeting. Everyone bring ideas to next meeting. Education is the key.

XI. FIELD MANAGER REPORTS

- Battle Mountain, Jerry Smith - See Attachment 8.
- Ely, Eric Luse - See Attachment 9. The prescribed burn that burned over, only burned 125 acres not in the plan. Forty of those acres went into the Dixie NF. Most of the prescribed burns are taking place in chaining areas. The PJ is encroaching back into the chainings. Don King inquired about progress on the Lincoln County Elk Plan. Eric will call him with an update.
- Elko, Helen Hankins - See Attachment 10 & 11.
- **Public Comment Period**

XII. 3809 REGULATIONS

- Helen Hankins - See Attachment 12.

XIII. ELKO DISTRICT LAND EXCHANGE

- Helen Hankins - See Attachment 13.

XIV. WILD HORSE AND BURRO TACTICAL PLAN AND PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Jerry Smith - The tactical plan was given to the State Director this month for approval. As of May 1, the budget was \$3.3 million and predicted a \$1.7 million deficit. It is now \$1.9 million based on keeping 1200 horses/day in Fallon. They plan to remove 6300 horses and were only budgeted for 3500. WO has supplemented budget to include 5000 horses and has given \$900,000 to apply to deficit. 3563 horses were gathered in the spring. Summer gathers saw 503 in Little Owyhee and 98 in the Jake's Wash (Emergency

gathers), 450 from Robert's Mountain, and plan to remove 1700 from Buck and Bald. Jerry will bring a FY2002 gather schedule to next meeting.

XV. SET TIME & PLACE FOR NEXT MEETING

- How can we make this most valuable to the RAC and in turn to the BLM and USFS? Will try sending out FM reports before the meeting. Meetings either quarterly or twice a year. Have most information available before meetings and form questions beforehand. Patsy appreciates the FM reports in person. Need to have a working meeting at next meeting
- **Patsy Tomera made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. It was seconded by Bill Upton with all in favor.**
- Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Vince Garcia.

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Minutes by Tanya Arnberger, Accounting Technician, Elko Field Office-BLM